

*SECRET INVASION*TM

MARVEL

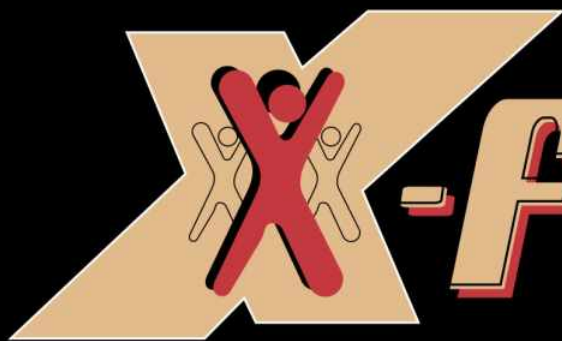
33

DAVID • STROMAN • SIBAL • COX

X-FACTOR[®]



HE LOVES YOU PART 1 of 3



IN A SOCIETY WHERE MUTANTS AND FORMER MUTANTS ALIKE FEEL THREATENED BY THE WORLD AROUND THEM, THEY TURN TO THEIR FIRST, BEST LINE OF DEFENSE WHENEVER TROUBLE ARISES: X-FACTOR, THE PRIVATE DETECTIVE AGENCY FOUNDED BY MADROX, THE MULTIPLE MAN.

X-FACTOR

PREVIOUSLY...



HAVING LEFT MUTANT TOWN BEHIND AS A SMOLDERING WRECK, X-FACTOR HAS RELOCATED TO DETROIT, PROMPTLY LOWERING THE PROPERTY VALUE OF LARRY STROMAN'S HOUSE. CALLING THEMSELVES XF INVESTIGATIONS, THEY HAVE QUICKLY DEVELOPED A REPUTATION FOR BEING THE GO-TO AGENCY FOR CASES THAT ARE SOMEWHAT UNUSUAL. MEANWHILE THE TEAM IS CONVINCED THAT THEY HAVE LEFT THE THREATS OF VAL COOPER AND THE O*N*E BEHIND, UNAWARE THAT VAL KNOWS EXACTLY WHERE THEY ARE AND HAS BEEN INSISTING ON MADROX'S COOPERATION LEST SHE MAKE XF'S LIFE EXTREMELY DIFFICULT.



"DETROIT GETS A BAD RAP, AND IT'S REALLY KIND OF UNFAIR."

"CATEGORIZING AN ENTIRE GEOGRAPHIC REGION, TARRING IT WITH ONE BRUSH... IT JUST ISN'T RIGHT."

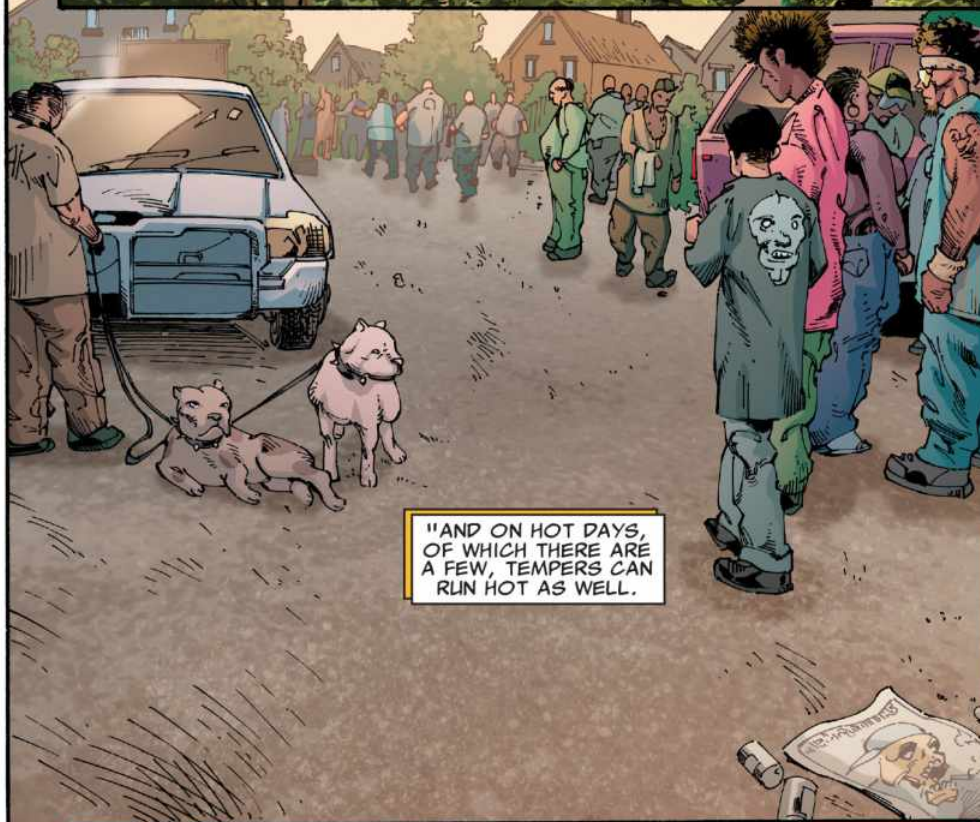
"EXCEPT NEW JERSEY. NEW JERSEY'S FAIR GAME 'CAUSE IT TOTALLY SUCKS."



"AND CLEVELAND."

"AND PORTLAND, OREGON. GOD, I HATE PORTLAND."

"BUT DETROIT'S PRETTY OKAY. ALTHOUGH ADMITTEDLY IT'S HAD ITS PROBLEMS HERE AND THERE."



"AND ON HOT DAYS, OF WHICH THERE ARE A FEW, TEMPERA CAN RUN HOT AS WELL."



"MAN...WHAT A SCORCHER, HUH?"

"FUNNY. YOU'D THINK THE WOMEN WOULDN'T BE WEARING MUCH OF ANYTHING BECAUSE OF THE HEAT. YET THE WOMEN AROUND HERE ARE RELATIVELY COVERED UP."



"PROBABLY BETTER BECAUSE, FRANKLY, THEY'RE NOT MUCH TO LOOK AT."



"GUYS AROUND HERE MUST BE PRETTY DESPERATE TO SETTLE FOR THESE DOGS."



"COME ON, GIRLS! SIT UP! ROLL OVER!"



UHHH...



...LONGSHOT...
WHAT DO YOU
THINK YOU'RE
DOING?

PRESSING
MY LUCK,
ARMANDO.

BUT ALL THAT
CRAP YOU'RE
SAYING...DO YOU
WANNA START
TROUBLE?

THAT
IS MORE OR
LESS THE
PLAN, YES.

THE DARWIN AWARDS

PETER
DAVID
WRITER

LARRY
STROMAN
PENCILER

JON
SIBAL
INKER

JEREMY
COX
COLORIST

VC'S CORY
PETIT
LETTERED

WILL PANZO &
AUBREY SITTERSON
EDITORS

JOE
QUESADA
EDITOR IN CHIEF

DAN
BUCKLEY
PUBLISHED





YEAH!
IT REALLY
IS!

GET
HIM, MAN!
DO IT!



WHY AIN'T HE
STRUGGLING?

YOU THINK
HE DROWNED?!?
THAT FAST!

YOU'RE, LIKE,
WATERBOARDING
HIM, MAN! MEBBE HE
PASSED OUT.



CHECK
UNDER HIS
THROAT. HE
MAY HAVE
DEVELOPED
GILLS.

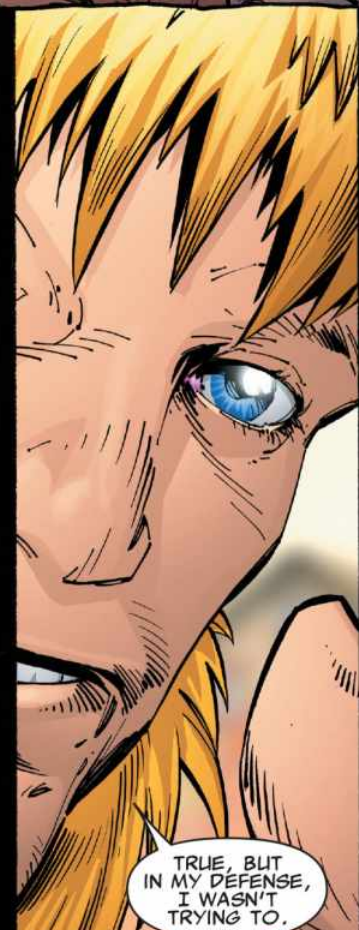


GILLS?!?
WHAT ARE YOU
TALKING AB--

WHAT THE
HELL--?!

TRY TO
DROWN HIM IN
ESTROGEN. I
BET HE'LL GROW
BREASTS.

YOU'RE
NOT HELPING,
LONGSHOT!



TRUE, BUT
IN MY DEFENSE,
I WASN'T
TRYING TO.



"I'M LOOKING FOR
MY SON, AND I HAVE
REASON TO BELIEVE



MAY I ASK
HOW YOU KNOW
THAT, MISTER...?



MLINOZ.
HECTOR
MLINOZ.

THE FACT IS,
MR. MADROX, XF
INVESTIGATIONS ISN'T
THE FIRST ONE I'VE
COME TO. I'VE BEEN
SEARCHING FOR
ARMANDO FOR
MONTHS.

THE LAST
REPORT I GOT
TRACED HIM TO
DETROIT, BUT
THAT'S WHERE THE
TRAIL WENT
COLD.



ALSO, I'VE
HEARD THAT
XF TENDS TO
"SPECIALIZE" IN
CERTAIN TYPES
OF CASES.



You don't
have to whisper.
Our office isn't
bugged.

Mutants.



DO
TELL.

WHAT
SPECIFICALLY,
HAVE YOU HEARD
ABOUT US, MR.
MLINOZ?

WELL, THAT
YOU'RE THE PEOPLE
TO COME TO WITH
ANYTHING INVOLVING,
UHM...



WHAT DID SHE JUST SAY?



SHE SAID THEY'RE NOT BUGGED, MS. COOPER.

WELL, YOU HAVE TO LOVE THE IRONY THERE.



"ARMANDO MUÑOZ." THAT NAME IS REALLY RINGING A BELL.

MADROX IS STILL TRYING TO PRESS HIM ON HIS PREVIOUS SOURCES OF INFORMATION, BUT MUÑOZ IS REMAINING VAGUE.



THAT'S ALWAYS A GOOD SIGN, WHEN A CLIENT ISN'T BEING CANDID RIGHT UP FRONT.

ALSO SAYS HE DOESN'T HAVE ANY RECENT PHOTOS OF HIM.

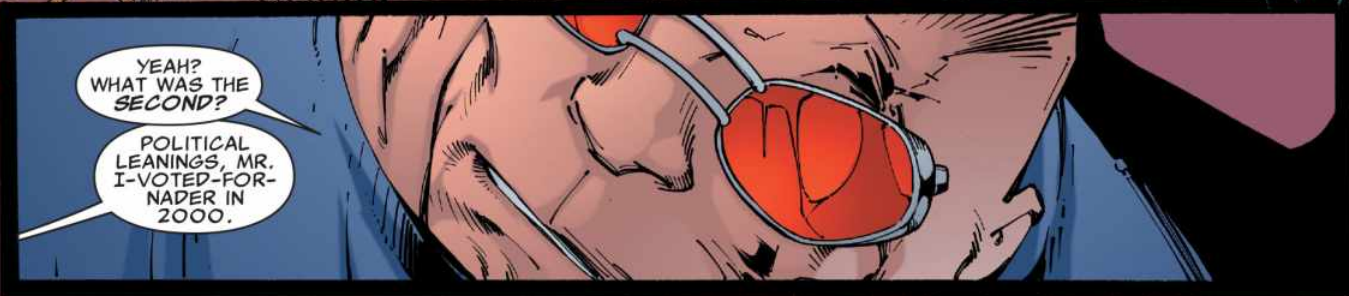


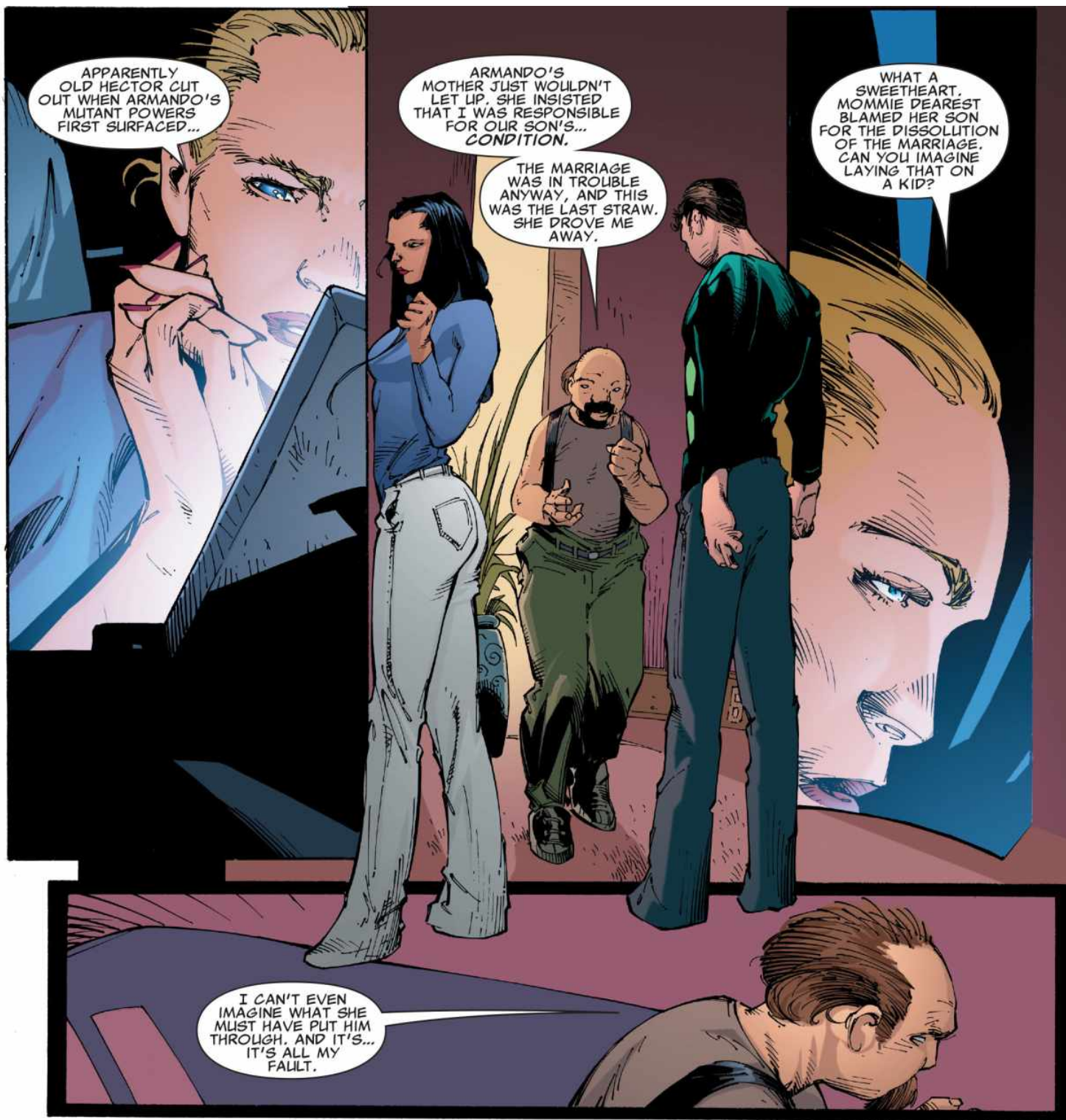
WELL, MAYBE WE DO.

C'MON, ARRR-MAHN-DO. TELL ME WHY THAT NAME IS SO FAMI--



CRAP. I MUST BE GETTING SENILE. OF COURSE, IT'S--













SO EASY
TO MANIPULATE,
THESE POOR
CREATURES.

HOW MUCH
THEY NEED US TO
SHOW THEM THE WAY.
TO PROVIDE THE
LIGHT FOR THEIR
DARKNESS.

TRUE, MANY WILL
FALL ALONG THE WAY...
BUT WE SKRULLS ARE MERE
GARDENERS. YES...GARDENERS,
TRIMMING AWAY THE DEAD
WOOD, SHAPING THE VAST
HEDGES OF HUMANITY INTO
A TRUE TOPIARY OF--

CRUNCH

EH?

HUNH.

MUST BE
PARANOID.
THIS PLANET
IS GETTING
TO ME...

I KNEW IT.
I FREAKING
KNEW IT.



THAT'S...
ARMANDO?

THE MOST
RECENT PHOTO
WE HAVE IN OUR
FILES, YES.

BUT...HIS
SKIN...IT'S...IT'S
SO PALE.



WELL, HE'S
CONSTANTLY EVOLVING
IN ORDER TO SURVIVE.
SINCE HE'S BEEN LIVING
MOSTLY IN CALIFASIAN
ENVIRONMENTS, MAYBE HIS
BODY FELT THE NEED TO
GET WHITER IN ORDER
TO BLEND IN.

THERE'S
A CHEERFUL
COMMENTARY
ON SOCIETY.

WHEN EDDIE
MURPHY WAS NINETEEN,
MANHATTAN CABS
WOULDN'T STOP FOR HIM.
USED TO BLOW PAST ME,
TOO. THAT'S SOCIETY
FOR YOU.



DON'T WORRY,
MR. MUNOZ. IF
ARMANDO IS IN
DETROIT, WE'LL
FIND HIM.

NOTHING'S
GOING TO
DISTRACT US.



YOUR KID'S
STILL USING MY
BLADDER AS A
TRAMPOLINE, MADROX.
I'M OFF TO PEE.
AGAIN.



WHY DOES SIRYN
FEEL THE NEED TO
ANNOUNCE THESE
THINGS?

I THINK
SHE'S TRYING
TO MAKE ME
FEEL GUILTY.

HOWZAT
WORKIN'
OUT?

PRETTY
SUCCESSFUL
SO FAR.



ANYWAY, MR. MLINOZ, AS I WAS SAYING, WE'RE ON IT...

I APPRECIATE THAT, MR. MADROX, BUT...



BUT WHAT?

WELL...DETROIT'S A BIG PLACE. AND THAT'S JUST THE CITY ITSELF, NOT COUNTING THE BURBS. I MEAN...



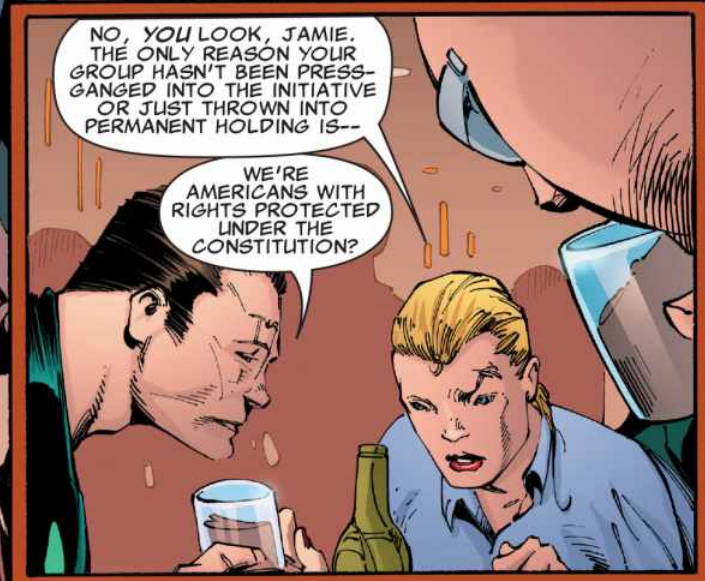
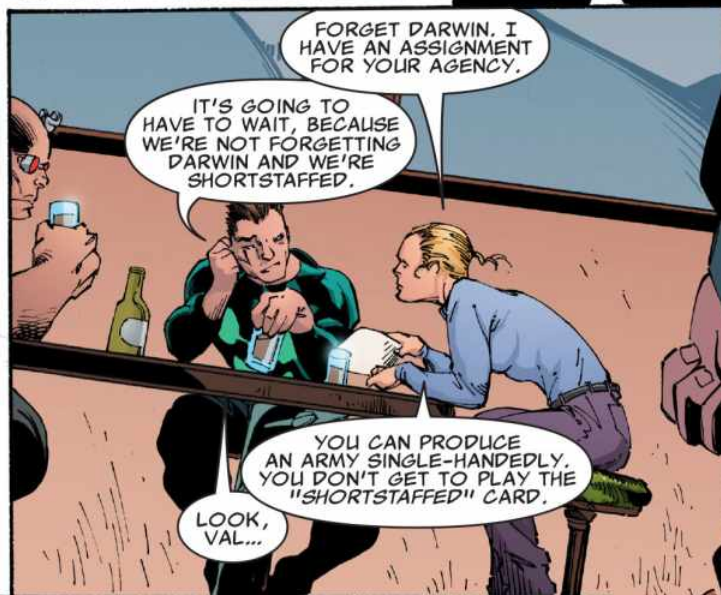
"...ARE YOU SURE YOU'VE GOT THE MANPOWER TO GET IT DONE? NO OFFENSE."

"NONE TAKEN, SIR."

"AND BELIEVE ME, WHEN IT COMES TO MANPOWER..."



...WE'VE GOT IT COVERED.





I'M NOT
SCREWING
AROUND HERE,
JAMIE.



NEITHER
AM I, VAL.

YOU
WANT TO HAUL
US IN? TRY AND
DO IT.

MAYBE YOU'LL
SUCCEED, OR MAYBE
WE'LL JUST DISAPPEAR
AGAIN AND START OVER
ELSEWHERE.



OR
MAYBE...

...MAYBE
YOU SHOULD
THINK ABOUT JUST
BACKING THE
HELL OFF.



WE'VE BEEN
PRETTY GOOD ABOUT
TAKING CARE OF THE CASES
YOU'VE COME TO ME ABOUT.
BUT YOU'VE GOT TO CUT US
SOME SLACK ON THE STREET-
LEVEL BUSINESS WE
ACQUIRE.

OH, I'VE "GOT
TO". HUH. TELL ME,
MADROX: HOW DO YOU
THINK THE REST OF YOUR
CREW WOULD FEEL
KNOWING THAT YOUR
INDEPENDENCE IS JUST
AN ILLUSION?

THAT THE
O*N*N*E HAS
YOU IN ITS BACK
POCKET?



...
YOU
WANT TO TELL
THEM? OR
SHOULD I?

THAT'S WHAT
I THOUGHT.

TWENTY-FOUR
HOURS, MADROX, TO
WRAP UP THIS DARWIN
BUSINESS. AND THEN I
WANT YOUR HEAD
SQUARELY IN OUR
GAME...

...OR I
TAKE IT OFF AT
THE NECK.



DON'T WORRY,
BOSS. YOU'LL THINK
OF A WITTY COMEBACK
AFTER SHE LEAVES,
LIKE ALWAYS.

THANKS.







I THINK THAT GIRL'S FOLLOWING US. I SAW HER BACK IN THE OTHER NEIGHBORHOOD.

GIRL? WHAT GIRL?

KLY'BN'S LOING! HER!

YOU KNOW HER? WHO IS SHE? AND WHO'S 'KLY'BN'?



FOR SOME REASON, I THOUGHT THAT RELOCATING TO DETROIT WOULD GIVE US A FEW CALMER MOMENTS. THAT NO LONGER BEING IN MUTANT TOWN WOULD RESULT IN--ON OCCASION--A CHANCE TO CATCH MY BREATH.

FLUNNY HOW THINGS NEVER WORK OUT THE WAY YOU EXPECT.

THIS IS MADROX. GO AHEAD, THERESA.

ONE OF YOUR DUPES CALLED IN.



TURNED UP A POSITIVE SIGHTING OF DARWIN. HE WAS TRAVELING WITH A GUY WHO--FROM THE DESCRIPTION--COULD BE LONGSHOT, WHO APPARENTLY STARTED A RIOT NEAR THE CASS CORRIDOR.

SOUNDS LIKE LONGSHOT, ALL RIGHT.

THEY TOOK OFF HEADING IN THE DIRECTION OF MIDTOWN.



TELL MONET TO--

--TRY TO SPOT THEM FROM THE AIR? ALREADY ON IT.

EXCELLENT. I'LL HAVE ALL DUPES IN THE AREA CONVERGE. GOOD JOB, THERESA.

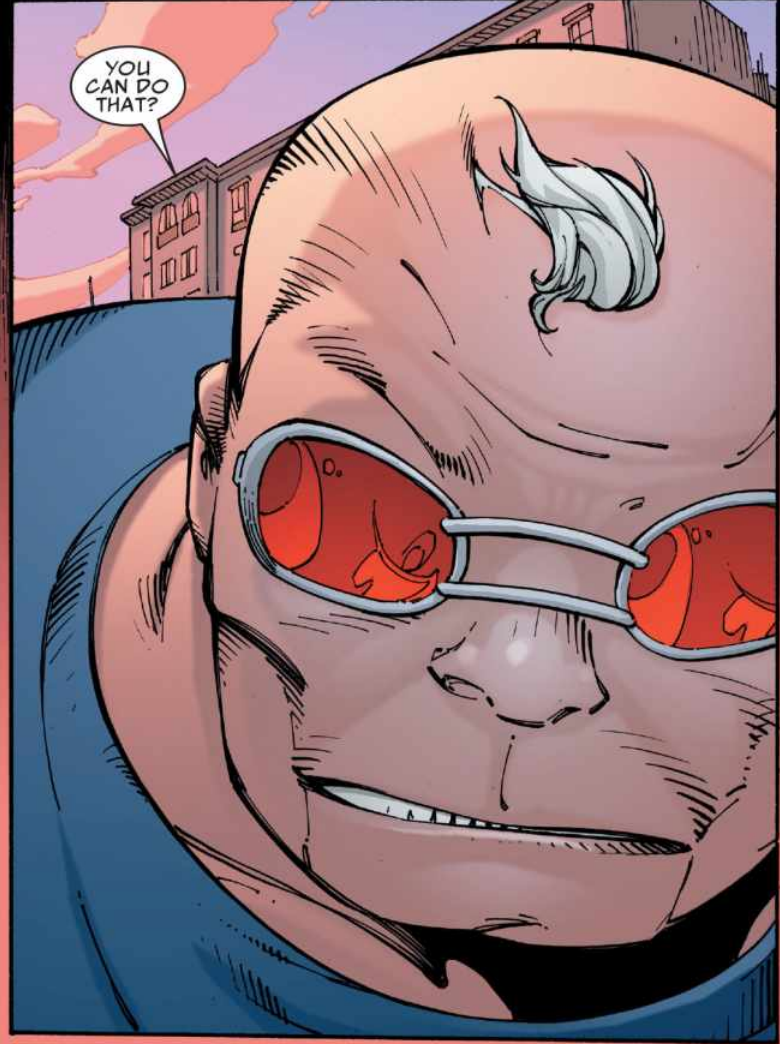


YOU'LL HAVE THE DUPES CONVERGE? HOW YA GONNA DO THAT?

I'LL LET THEM KNOW.

HOW? BY THINKIN' HARD?

PRETTY MUCH.



YOU CAN DO THAT?

GUIDO...

YOU'D BE AMAZED WHAT I CAN DO.



HOLD IT!!!



I SAID HOLD IT!



HOW DARE YOU! HOW DARE YOU ADDRESS ME IN SUCH A MANNER!



HAVE YOU NO LOYALTY AT ALL?

FWOOSH



YES! JUST NOT TO YOU!



NOW SURRENDER BEFORE I--





TO BE CONTINUED IN SHE-HULK #31.





Shadowcat

